

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1509

C 253 L 05

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing a property tax exemption to widows or widowers of members of the military.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Finance (originally sponsored by Representatives Green, Conway, Orcutt, Appleton, Morrell, O'Brien, Lovick, McCoy, Kilmer, Kessler, McDermott, Campbell, Simpson, Hunt, Chase, P. Sullivan, Sells, Kirby, Kenney, Linville and Kagi; by request of Governor Gregoire).

House Committee on Finance

Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

All real and personal property in this state is subject to property tax each year based on its value, unless a specific exemption is provided by law.

Some senior citizens and persons retired due to disability are entitled to property tax relief on their principal residences. To qualify, a person must be 61 years old in the year of application or retired from employment because of a disability, own his or her principal residence, and have a disposable income of less than \$35,000 a year. Persons meeting these criteria are entitled to partial property tax exemptions and a valuation freeze.

Summary:

A property tax exemption in the form of a grant is provided to certain widows and widowers of veterans based on their disposable household income.

The widow or widower must meet all the requirements of the senior citizen property tax exemption program except the income limits. In addition, the widow or widower must be at least age 62 when he or she applies for assistance and must be a widow or widower of a veteran who: died as a result of a service-connected disability; was rated as 100 percent disabled for the 10 years prior to death; was a prisoner of war and rated as 100 percent disabled for at least one year prior to death; died while on active duty; or died in active military training status. The retired widow or widower cannot remarry.

The assistance is equal to regular and excess property taxes imposed on the difference between the value eligible for exemption under the senior citizen program and:

- \$50,000 if the income level is \$35,001 to \$40,000;
- \$75,000 if the income level is \$30,001 to \$35,000; or

- \$100,000 if the income level is \$30,000 or less.

Claims must be filed with the Department of Revenue (Department) no later than thirty days before the tax is due. The Department may waive this requirement for good cause shown.

Veterans are persons who were honorably discharged or discharged for physical reasons with an honorable record from the armed forces of the United States and served during periods of war or between World War I and World War II. Women's air force service pilots and certain merchant mariners are eligible.

This change first applies to property tax due for collection in 2006.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	94	0	
Senate	44	0	(Senate amended)
House	98	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 24, 2005